

Ilya Rozanov's Guide to Interacting with the Media

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Ilya Rozanov's Guide to Interacting with the Media

by [ARustySpork](#)

Summary

Use this foolproof guide to make the fans love you! Not recommended by publicists.

Notes

First of all, holy batman. Somehow I have become an authority on hockey. Someone commented that my hockey knowledge awakened their competency kink, and I actually think that's maybe the greatest compliment I've ever received.

But for real, I'm so happy to see all the hockey fans in my comments that are getting all the references, but also everyone new to the sport! I only got into it a few years ago, but unfortunately I can't do anything halfway, so I'm really deep in it now. That being said, I still have a lot I don't know, so please let me know if I made any mistakes because I love me some sport accuracy.

I have never done this much research for anything in my life, and I literally study engineering. I think about hockey every hour I'm conscious. And sometimes when I'm not. I went into this insane deep dive about the Russian 5 in Detroit and also the Punch-Up in Piestany. I won't shut up about it, I've become insufferable.

Huge shoutout to my friend from Newfoundland, Lydia, my dialogue consultant. This absolute king did all my Newfie slang translations and was even sending me voicenotes so I could imagine how it sounds. Just know you are reading 100% newfie approved dialogue here with full cultural accuracy.

Anywho, the universe has determined that my new niche is hockey, and that sounds good to me. Enjoy this new one 😊

In the future, I have a plan for a more plot based fic. Let's see if this happens, I can write hockey but I'm not so sure I can write plot. I haven't taken an English class in 6 years. Pray for me.

Guys this is embarrassing but I wrote too many endnotes for the character limit so I'm putting the some of it here (spoilers for this fic) 😭

Once again, I can't resist referencing specific NHL moments. The difficult truth about hockey players is that for a lot of them, their only personality is hockey. There's a reason Shane's interviews were based off of the way Crosby and McDavid talk. Because of this, I'm heavily basing a lot of how Ilya interacts with the press similarly to how Brad Marchand does so, they have so many parallels that I feel it may be intentional in how he is written. I also often think of Marc-Andre Fleury and David Pastarnak when writing Ilya. They definitely have notable personalities that I think reflects the more whimsical side of Ilya. I stole how Ilya responded to the press based on how Leon Draisaitl interacts with the press. There are some great compilations of him being mean to the press.

Yes, I am aware that since Quinn Hughes was drafted in 2018, he would only have entered the NHL after Ilya was already in Ottawa. But consider this: I can do what I want. My mom gave me permission. Honestly though, if you haven't seen the clips of Quinn Hughes seeing ghosts, PLEASE look them up. He's currently considered one of the best defensemen in the league, but he's gone viral several times because people catch him during games just completely zoned out like he knows the exact time and way all of his teammates are going to die. He was the captain of the Canucks before being traded to Minnesota this year, and the general consensus is that the ghosts were traded with him.

Newf is a character I made up since we need more Newfoundlander representation in this world. I think the best way to describe a Newfie accent is that it sounds Irish, but then with a bit of Southern twang. Also fun fact, the reason this character is named Newf is because of a customer my dad used to have that was from Newfoundland, but everyone called him Newf. To this day we don't know what his actual name is. It's crazy how few Newfoundlanders are in the NHL! If you want a point of reference for this character, look up clips of Hitch from Shorsey, who's actor actually used to be in the NHL. For your files, here's an example of a Newfie accent:

[Newfie Accent](#)

The interaction between these two sisters is stolen from how I teach my sister about hockey. I made her watch the Jets vs Oilers game over the holidays, and she knows I like Draisaitl, but she could never keep up with who was who on the ice. So, I said "if you see a guy skating around with his jersey tucked up and showing off his slutty little waist, that's probably Leon Draisaitl," and I was right for the entire game. I actually looked into this because I wanted to know why hockey players did this, and I found out that it's technically against the rules, even though it's really popular among a lot of players, like Gretzky and Ovechkin. Generally it's not enforced though, unless it really obscures your number. Unfortunately, when I was working on this in class, someone saw my notes for the chapter and I ended up having to explain why I was writing about slutty waists in my hockey fanfiction to some guy in my Law and Ethics for Engineers class.

It was their last game before a roadie, and the Sharks were in the building.

Ilya would never admit it, but he was jealous of their sweaters. Half the NHL was just red and blue. Why not switch it up a little? At least he wasn't an Admiral, their jerseys were as basic as they came.

Ilya spent most of warmups bothering Newf, who liked to do this one weird stretch that involved him sticking his legs way up in the air and flopping them back and forth.

"B'ys are ya ready fer da roadie?" Newf asked. "By da lard thunderin' Jaysus, we was gone dat long last time da misses was right crooked wit me."

"What the fuck are you saying to me right now?" Ilya replied, leaning on his stick.

"Roz!" Cliff said, gliding up beside him. "Walk in with me?"

Ilya was not at all a superstitious guy, but about a month ago, Cliff had scored a hat trick. It was in a seven goal game against the Caps, so it really wasn't much of a flex, but Cliff had insisted that the reason for this achievement was that he had left the ice following warmups at the same time as Ilya. Because of this, he now insisted on leaving at the same time as Ilya for every game.

Ilya chirped nonstop for it, but Cliff was not deterred. He was also not deterred by the fact that this routine had not earned him any more goals than normal.

Ilya rolled his eyes as he followed Cliff to the tunnel, a plethora of Boston fans banging jubilantly on the glass walls at their arrival. As the pair approached, stepping onto the rubber mats, Ilya observed the fans that were pressing their phones against the glass, and holding it through the boards just to grab a picture. He was particularly distracted by the teenage boy that was nearly falling off the balcony, secured only by a girl holding onto his shirt behind him. He was holding his phone out in front of him, more focused on what was on the screen than what was in front of his face.

Seeing the opportunity presented to him, Ilya reached up his hand, and plucked the phone from the kid's hand. He pointed the camera at his face as he walked into the tunnel, the kid seemingly too shocked to protest.

"Hey everyone, this is Ilya Rozanov, best and most handsome player in NHL," Ilya said nonchalantly. "Feeling good about game. The Sharks are terrible. Will be fun." He rounded the corner towards the locker room. "I don't know whose phone this is, I hope is Boston fan, otherwise you will be very disappointed tonight I think. Anyway, must go, big plans to beat Sharks tonight."

He turned the phone back around to press stop.

"Whose phone is that?" Cliff asked, taking off his gloves and stuffing them into his locker.

"Your mother's."

Cliff rolled his eyes, turning back to his own phone.

“Carry, come here, I need you to do weird toothless smile.”

When it was time to head out for the first period, Ilya had collected a series of photos of his teammates in increasingly outrageous scenarios. Including but not limited to: Carmichael lying completely prone on Marleau, Connors attempting the dirty dancing lift with Hammersmith, and Newf with his head almost completely wrapped in stick tape.

Ilya backed up the line as the Bears began their descent back onto the ice, taking a pit stop to toss the phone up to the shellshocked fan.

“Your lockscreen is picture of girl from anime?” Ilya shouted up at the balcony.

“Yes?” he stuttered back.

“That’s stupid. Change it.”

* * *

Shane hated doing these interviews.

The league always used All-Star weekend as an opportunity to bank videos of the players to release throughout the year. The main problem was that the league really tried to show off player personalities, they said it attracted more young people to the sport, got people more invested.

Shane had been media trained since he was twelve. He could handle press conferences. He knew how to answer every possible question about hockey, even awkward ones about management and his teammates.

What he was not trained for, was being asked what kind of animal he wished he was on the ice.

“Um...” Shane started, already feeling the blush come over his face. “In this scenario does it act on ice like it would on land? Is it actual hockey capabilities or just the general demeanor? Or should I be picking an animal that is already proficient at travelling on ice?”

The woman behind the camera paused, like she hadn’t considered this line of questioning.

“Jesus Christ Hollander, just answer question.”

Ilya Rozanov lurked in the doorway, tucked behind the reflector.

“Is he allowed in here?” Shane frowned.

“He’s going after you,” the producer replied.

“You make things so complicated.”

“I need direction!”

“Just pick an animal, Hollander!”

“I don’t know! A polar bear?”

Ilya shook his head. “No, I think you would be penguin.”

“This is my interview, Rozanov, can someone kick him out?”

Ilya held up his hands in surrender. “I’ll be good, I promise.”

Shane scowled, but didn’t push. “Is that good?” He asked the producer.

“For sure, we got it. We just have one more thing for you.”

A couple of assistants came in to move a table in front of where Shane was standing. Laid out across it was hockey tape, two dozen rolls of a variety of sizes and colours. The producer reached out to hand him a fresh hockey stick.

“We’re getting videos of all the different players showing us how they tape their sticks,” she said excitedly. “Go ahead at your leisure, but try and explain your method and what you’re doing.”

Shane nodded, twisting the stick around a few times in his hand. He picked up a thick roll of white Renfrew.

“Well, first I always start at the bottom, and I just do a regular wrap, all the way up, nothing crazy.” Shane stuck out his tongue as he carefully wrapped his stick, meticulously watching the overlap of each band. “At the end I just leave a tiny little bit of black.”

He took a pair of scissors that had been laid out for him and trimmed along the tip of the blade. “Normally I would apply wax to the edges, I like Renfrew for this too, but we’ll skip that for now.”

Shane flipped the stick around so the handle was pointing up. He took the opportunity to flick his eyes up to Ilya, who was still leaning lazily in the door stop. He had a goofy grin on his face.

“At the top, I wrap it evenly around the base five times, so it has some resistance, then I wrap it down, for these sticks I’ll always wrap it so the end lands halfway through the logo, it helps with my spacing. I always cut the tape at an angle so it looks smooth and clean. Last thing, I take a sharpie and write 'YUNA' on the tape on my handle.” He paused as he scribbled away. “That’s my mom’s name.”

Shane smiled proudly as he held up his stick to the camera. “And that’s pretty much it. If we’re doing other colours of tape, like for pride night or breast cancer, I’ll usually only tape the handle, I don’t like colours on the ice since it’s a bit distracting. But, you know, nothing too crazy, pretty typical tape job.”

Shane heard a laugh echo out from the back of the room.

Shane scowled. “Now what?”

“You say nothing crazy, then do the most specific ritual I have ever seen.”

“Okay, you’re one to talk! You literally have the worst tape in the league.”

Ilya pushed himself off the doorway, approaching the producer. “I am next, yes? Can I start with this one?” He asked, gesturing to the table of tape.

“Sure, we should be all done with you, Shane, thank you so much for helping us out.”

“No problem,” Shane smiled. “Thanks, you guys.”

He began to head for the doorway, but stopped himself, instead retreating back to stand next to the producer.

“You like to watch, Hollander?” Ilya grinned. The Russian had dropped his jacket to reveal a Boston Bears T-shirt that was one size too small. Of course.

Shane didn’t grace that with a response, sitting back on his heels and crossing his arms as he watched Ilya launch into his segment.

“Hello internet,” he started. “I am Ilya Rozanov, and I am here to show you very best tape job in all of NHL.”

Shane rolled his eyes.

“First, I take out end cap. Is terrible, I hate it. I always use the black tape. Much better than terrible white tape. I take this thick tape, but I only use little bit.”

He used his fingernail to pull off a thin strip just along the edge of the tape, letting it rip off as he began to wrap it several times around the edge of the handle. He then unwrapped all of the unused tape, squashed it into a ball, and hucked it at the camera.

“I don’t need scissors either. I am very good with my hands.” He sent a wink at the camera. “Then I take normal size, I put it over end. I like my pinkie, I like to keep it.”

He moved to tape the handle, leaving large gaps of exposed stick as he wrapped. “We do candy cane, whoomp, whoomp, whoomp,” he added sound effects every time he completed a rotation. He ended with a flat edge, ripping off the tape.

He flipped the stick around so the blade was pointing up. “Always start at tip.” He placed his tape and began to swing around the blade. “Candy cane again, whoomp whoomp whoomp.” He rounded the tape only three times, once again leaving large gaps of exposed blade surface.

He ripped the tape again, patting down the edge, then spun the stick around to display it to the camera with a cheeky smile.

After a moment of silence from the room, Shane spoke. "That's insane."

Ilya tsked. "That is no way to talk to best player in NHL."

"How quickly do you go through your sticks?"

"Is unimportant. You cannot interfere with perfection."

Shane rolled his eyes so hard it hurt.

"Oh wait," Ilya started. "I almost forgot. Does anyone have silver marker?"

He looked around the room, waiting only a few moments before a PA tossed one to him. He flipped the stick back around so he was holding the handle. His brow furrowed in frustration as he began to scribble on the tape.

He flipped it around to show a crude drawing of a frowning face.

"This is picture of Shane Hollander when I beat him. Very important part of process. Helps me remember what game is all about."

* * *

"Guess what, Hollander?"

Ilya skated back and forth along the red line, his stick resting along his thighs as he leant forward.

"What?"

Shane was doing another one of his stretches that always derailed Ilya's train of thought. That yoga was really doing wonders.

"I have mic today!" He exclaimed, gesturing to his chest. "Management says I am very entertaining. And sexy."

"Just wait 'til you land in the box and they're gonna have to mute your mic for the entire power play."

"Hey. I have very good temper. Very family friendly. They think I am cursing but I am just saying 'puck.' I am very concerned about where it is."

"Right. Well you know what the fans would really love? A fight, those are always fun to watch."

Ilya wagged his gloved finger at the opposing captain. "I see what you are doing here Hollander, you are trying to goad me into penalty. Well it is working, you are convincing me."

"Have they made you start paying rent in the penalty box yet?"

“No, but they have started installing mini fridges for me, stocked with cokes. Maybe we will fight tonight, I will ask them to add ginger ale.”

Instead of responding with some comment about how he never fights, and he certainly would never fight him, Shane just blinked. “How do you know I like ginger ale?”

Ilya shrugged, pirouetting a few times on the ice as he spoke. “I notice a lot of things about you, Hollander, like your weak backhand.”

Shane spluttered. “You know I don’t have a weak backhand.”

“Good luck Hollander!” Ilya called out as he skated to the bench. “See you in the box!”

“As if!”

Ilya pressed his face up against the glass of the penalty box, grinning at Hollander.

“Shut up,” Hollander said, muffled through the glass.

“I didn’t say anything!”

“It’s just a minor! You’re the one that crosschecked Drapeau to the moon.”

“You must think I’m very strong and muscular to check someone to the moon.”

Shane rolled his eyes, chewing on his mouthguard as he turned his eyes back to the game.

Ilya turned to the penalty box attendant, a middle aged man in a suit who looked relieved that Ilya hadn’t chosen tonight to angrily break his stick again. Ilya was really trying not to do that anymore, he almost took out his eye last time.

“Nice night?” Ilya asked.

The attendant shrugged.

“What is your name?”

The attendant didn’t look up from his clipboard. “Francois.”

“What are you having for supper tonight?” Ilya tried again.

“My partner is making soup.”

Ilya waited for him to elaborate. He did not. “What kind of soup?”

The attendant shrugged.

“Have you ever had borscht? Russian dish, you will never want to have another soup again. It will turn your stomach red.”

“I don’t like beets.”

Ilya huffed, slumping down on the bench. “So it turns out all Canadians really are this boring.”

Ilya had prepared to pout for a little while longer, but then he had an idea. He turned to tap on the glass connecting the two penalty boxes, looking past the official in the middle.

“Hollander!” He shouted.

Shane turned to him with a scowl. “What?”

“Have you ever had borscht?”

“What?”

“Borscht! Russian beet soup.”

Shane blinked. “I think so? Once? At a teammate's house when I was, like, twelve?”

“Did you like it?”

“It was good?”

Ilya nodded, turning back to the attendant. “See, Hollander has had borscht.”

Ilya turned back to the ice, Hollander taking a few moments to realize that Ilya did not plan on finishing the conversation.

“Why did you ask me if I’ve had borscht?”

“Is reasonable question, Hollander! Francois has never had it!”

“Why do you know the name of Montreal’s penalty box attendant?”

“Because I asked, Hollander. I am extremely friendly and polite. Try it sometime.”

Shane opened his mouth, ready to retort, but his own attendant tapped on his shoulder.

“Ten seconds,” she said.

“Thanks Camille,” he said, sending one last glare to Ilya before he darted out of the box.

Ilya looked at Francois. “You know I have been wearing mic this whole time?”

* * *

The upside to playing other American teams was that they only had to stand around on the ice for one anthem to be played.

It was a petty argument, Ilya knew that, after all, what was an extra two minutes standing on the ice. But half the time the singer seemed to be some local celebrity that was using those two minutes to belt out every note, vibrating their voice with every word as if it made it sound more impressive.

At least he wasn't a goalie. Those guys had to stand out on the ice all by themselves.

"Now, performing the national anthem, Sheldon Atchley," a voice boomed over the loudspeaker.

"Oh say, can you see..."

Ilya looked up to the jumbotron which projected an image that matched the confusion entering his ears. This man was performing the national anthem on the bongos.

Ilya turned to his left winger, a Fin called Räikkönen, who looked equally bewildered. Ilya tried to muffle his giggles.

And oh god, the camera was panning to him, and Ilya's face was now on the big screen. He put every ounce of energy he had into looking stoic and serious, but really he just looked like he was on the verge of tears. His shaking shoulders made it look like he was fully sobbing.

They won the game, barely, pulling ahead with two goals in the third period.

"It looks like you guys had a tough time in the first two periods, but really tightened up your offense in the last period, how did you guys get back in your groove?"

Ilya sniffed, still sweat soaked and fresh off the ice. "I think in the first we were a bit thrown by the bongo anthem, but after we recovered from that it was just like normal, yes?"

* * *

NHL Follow Tracker 🔄 @NHLFollowTrack

👉 @BostonBears (Boston Bears) unfollowed 30:

- ✅ @MontrealVoyageurs (Montreal Voyageurs)
- ✅ @TBLightning (Tampa Bay Lightning)
- ✅ @DetroitRedWings (Detroit Red Wings)
- ✅ @Canes (Caroline Hurricanes)
- ✅ @BlueJacketsNHL (Columbus Blue Jackets)
- ✅ @NJDevils (New Jersey Devils)

(1/6)

NHL Follow Tracker 🔄 @NHLFollowTrack

👉 @BostonBears (Boston Bears) followed 1:

- ✅ @realmattdamon (Matt Damon)

NHL Follow Tracker 🔄 @NHLFollowTrack

👉 @IlyaRozanov (Ilya Rozanov) unfollowed 1:

- ✅ @NHLBears (Boston Bears)

NHL Follow Tracker 📶 @NHLFollowTrack

👉 @IlyaRozanov (Ilya Rozanov) followed 1:

✅ @CanadaDry (Canada Dry)

abby @ilyarozanovsbackcheck
gang what is going on on twitter rn?

issac @bearsfanbutnotthatkind
rozanov is being petty af and i respect it

flo @hockeyhockeyhockey
does anyone know why he would be following ginger ale all of a sudden?

Ilya Rozanov 📶 @ilyarozanov
my tummy hurts

* * *

Post game interviews seemed to increase exponentially during the playoffs. Even after losses, Ilya was marched into the press room, freshly showered and with the hood of his Bears sweater cloaking his head.

At least he wasn't left to do it alone. They had started pairing him up with Newf for this series, he had been performing well and had become a bit of a fan favourite. For Ilya, it was strange to suddenly be the most intelligible person in the room. Maybe that was why there were about two dozen phones and audio recorders on the table.

"We had some fierce kills early on b'y. It's hard to make a go of it when you're practically rentin' space in the penalty box. I tell ya what, I wasn't fond ah' some ah' dem calls, but sure what can ya do? Tryin' to pin down New York is like tryin' to catch cod with your bare hand after latherin' up in canola oil—you're only makin' a show ah' ya self."

Ilya thinks he understood why the press liked Newf so much. Interviewing hockey players after a game was like watching paint dry, but somehow this guy always managed to make it entertaining. Ilya could sometimes be fun after a win, but days like this? He pretty much resorted to "we need to shoot the puck" until they gave up.

"This next question is for Rozanov. You haven't been able to produce a lot this series, does it add to the frustration that a lot of people are saying Boston just isn't where it needs to be to win another cup?"

Ilya stared down the reporter. "No, I just love going without a point in three games, it's great. Exactly where I want to be."

Ilya hoped that the sarcasm worked its way through his accent. The rest of the room took his grumpy response as a sign to ask Newf another question, lest Ilya explode.

As he listened to Newf list off another one of his insane analogies, they were interrupted by a buzzing sound. Ilya looked to the table in front of them, absolutely littered with phones,

before quickly identifying the cause of the vibrations. He picked it up, an iPhone in a plain back case, and flipped it to look at the screen.

“Whose phone is this?” he asked, waving it to the crowd. “Somebody’s mother is calling.”

A murmur went through the crowd but no one called out to claim it. Ilya swiped to answer the call.

“Hello? No, this is Ilya Rozanov.”

A wave of chuckles went through the crowd.

“Are you hockey fan?” he asked. “No, of course not, that’s okay, I am friend of your kid’s.”

Someone finally seemed to awaken from wherever they were in the room, as a frazzled looking man approached the table looking to retrieve his phone. Ilya held up his hand, gesturing for him to wait.

“Is tough,” Ilya said, slumping back in his chair. “We just lost our game, yes, but series is not over yet. I am very good hockey player, better than Shane Hollander.” Ilya frowned as the woman’s voice responded through the phone speaker. “You know Shane Hollander but you do not know Ilya Rozanov?”

That got a proper laugh from Newf, who threw his head back as he loudly cackled and pointed at the Russian.

“I think we should never speak again, Marianne. Goodbye.”

He hung up the phone, passing it back to the wide-eyed man.

“She is nice woman,” Ilya stated, “but terrible taste in hockey players.”

* * *

Sonya was a new fan to hockey, and she really wasn’t in it for the sport. Sure, she followed the points, she cheered for her favourite team, and she liked it when they started fighting, but really her favourite thing about hockey was the players.

It was like they were characters in her favourite show, interacting with one another, and every game was like a crossover. She had a lot of favourite characters, most of them weren’t even on her team, but she had seen gif sets on Tumblr and started to become more familiar with everyone’s personality and what they were known for.

But it always came back to Boston. She loved the atmosphere, even if she was experiencing it from the nosebleeds.

Today was the first time she was attending with the intention of making it for warmups down by the glass. She had even made a sign for her favourite player, Kehoe, or known affectionately by the fans and players as “Newf.”

Sonya's sister was accompanying her. Her sister was not much of a hockey fan, but had absorbed bits and pieces by osmosis since she wouldn't shut up about it.

"Why are they humping the ice?" her sister asked.

"That's just a regular hockey stretch. For your hips."

"Huh. Well I get why they call it the boy aquarium."

They fell into silence again, the only sound between them that of blades scraping the ice.

"Where's the guy that always looks like he sees ghosts?"

"That's Quinn Hughes, and he plays for Vancouver."

"Okay and so who are the red and blue guys?"

"Montreal."

"Okay."

Another pause as her sister took out her phone to take some videos.

"You posting those?"

She shrugged. "Maybe I'll be TikTok famous. Who's that other guy you like? The Russian?"

"Ilya Rozanov. He's the captain, he's number 81."

Her sister squinted as she looked through the glass. "I can't see fuck-all from here. They keep going too fast."

Sonya cocked her head to the side, easily spotting Boston's captain.

"Look, if you're ever looking for Rozanov, just look for the guy that's got his jersey tucked in the back, there's a 90% chance it's gonna be Rozanov."

Her sister blinked. "You're totally right. Why do they do that?"

"I dunno. Probably just to show off his slutty little waist."

Her sister lifted up her phone to snap another photo. "Who's that he's talking to?"

Sonya craned her neck. "Oh, that's Montreal's captain, Shane Hollander. He's also one of the best in the league. They always talk during warmups, it's become a thing online."

Her sister zoomed in with her phone camera as she recorded. "I wonder what they talk about."

"Probably their undying love for one another. There's a decent amount of fanfic out there."

“Oh my god, speaking of, I started reading the Crosby/Geno stuff, and it’s really good.”

Sonya blinked. “I’m the hockey fan here and even I don’t read hockey fanfiction. Do you even know what’s going on?”

She shrugged. “The language of love is universal. Did Rozanov just blow him a kiss?”

Sonya turned back to the rink, but the Russian was long gone. “Show me the video.”

The two girls crouched over the screen to watch Ilya Rozanov, notorious pest, blow a kiss at Shane Hollander, causing the Canadian to blush so hard it could be seen from across the rink.

“Maybe they are in love.”

“Or maybe he’s just really European.”

* * *

The camera focuses on Scott Hunter, who smiles down the lens. He’s wearing his Admirals jersey, C stitched over his heart.

“Scott, growing up, who was your favourite hockey player?”

Scott looked to the side, pondering for a moment, before turning back to the camera.

“Growing up I always really admired Mark Messier. His leadership is always something I aspire to, and it’s kinda poetic now that I’m playing for the Admirals too.”

Cut

“Of all time? Sergei Federov.”

Cut

“I know he’s definitely a legacy player, but Maurice Richard,” Shane smiled, “My dad got me this book about hockey legends when I was little, I think I reread it until it crumbled. I always loved his chapter.”

Cut

“My favourite player growing up was Keith Tkachuk.”

Cut

“Oh, that’s tough,” said JJ. “I think Mario Lemieux.”

Cut

“Huh. Maybe Brendan Shanahan?”

Cut

The rookie looked sheepish. “Growing up, my favourite player was Ilya Rozanov.”

Cut

“My favourite player growing up was Ilya Rozanov.”

The room paused, before a series of laughs broke out from behind the camera.

“Is that okay?” Ilya asked, smiling.

“Yeah, that’s perfect!”

* * *

Natalie had wanted to be a sports reporter her whole life, or at least, after she realized she didn’t make a good athlete.

She finally had her in, a real life pass into the Ottawa Centaurs press room. And not only that, it was just in time for things to really pick up. Ilya Rozanov was joining the Centaurs, and Natalie was going to be there when it happened.

It was her first time being sent in alone. She set up her audio recorder neatly on the table, and took her seat in the second row. She had written up a whole paper of questions she could ask, some technical, some about the team atmosphere, all very professional.

Unfortunately, her boss was an asshole. He only wanted her to ask two things: Why did Ilya Rozanov leave Boston, and what did he think about Scott Hunter coming out?

Natalie frowned. She wasn’t some reporter from TMZ, but she had just started this job, she couldn’t risk doing anything to lose her spot in this room. They’d replace her in a second.

The room filled to full capacity before Ilya Rozanov entered the room, accompanied by the GM and Coach Wiebe. He’s wearing a Centaurs jersey, already marked with a captain’s C.

He took a seat, and the questions started flooding in.

Natalie wasn’t getting picked, though she raised her hand politely each time it was prompted. Rozanov answered questions exactly how she’d expected. Smooth, snarky, but direct. There were a lot of questions about the move, though he never truly gave a direct answer about why. Natalie could guess, he was for sure getting paid much more in Ottawa than Boston could ever offer him. He was asked about the captaincy, how he was getting along with the other players, how their strategy was going to change, typical stuff.

“Mm... You with the red hair,” Rozanov said, gesturing into the crowd.

Fuck. Natalie was the one with the red hair. She stood up, straightening her notebook, trying to figure out how to ask the question she had to ask without sounding like a total asshole.

“Mr. Rozanov, last season the Boston Bears made it to the third round of the playoffs before being eliminated by the New York Admirals, who would go on to win the Stanley Cup. Last

season was historic in more ways than one, what was your response to the final game and the moment with Scott Hunter?"

God, she did sound like an asshole, but the rest of the room seemed to lean in a bit closer at her question.

Rozanov pressed his lips together as he leaned into the microphones. "I think it is terrible."

Natalie blinked as the room went silent. What the fuck was she thinking, asking a Russian what he thought about the gay hockey player?

"You think what Scott Hunter did at the final was terrible?" She heard herself ask.

"Yes," he reiterated. "He is so old, the only reason he won cup is because LA was too afraid to hit him. Afraid his knees would turn to dust. Was hardly a win."

Natalie willed her brain to keep up with what was happening, which seemed to be the general consensus of the rest of the room, she could see the tension in the Centaurs' coaches face.

"You're talking about him winning the cup?"

"Yes, it should not be allowed for dinosaur to be captain of hockey team. It is elder abuse."

A couple of laughs echoed around the room. A reporter to Natalie's left nudged her to keep going.

"Sorry, I was talking about after the game? When Scott Hunter brought his boyfriend onto the ice?"

"Ah, yes," Rozanov nodded. "This was very unfortunate."

The room went silent again.

"Kip is nice man, I met him at awards. It is terrible he is dating old man who is bad at hockey."

Rozanov's coach looked like he was one breath away from a brain aneurysm.

"So...you support Scott Hunter in his coming out?"

Rozanov shrugged. "Sure, sure, yes. It is very important that there is diversity in the league. Hockey is for all, as long as you are not old man. Like Scott Hunter."

"Okay," Coach Wiebe interjected, "thank you for your time today everyone, I think Rozanov here is itching to get on the ice and start winning some games, so, we'll see you Monday!"

As he ushered his captain out of the room, Natalie heard the coach mutter.

"Jesus fucking christ, Rozanov. Can't you answer questions like a normal person?"

"But coach, it is so much more fun this way."

* * *

“Can I please wear the visor?” Ilya asked, adjusting his shirt, the Tim Hortons logo plastered across his breast.

“You’re gonna look like an idiot,” Shane replied.

“No. We will look like idiots, because you will wear one too.”

This whole thing was the work of Yuna Hollander. She kept emphasizing how important it was to lean into the idea that Shane and Ilya were friends, that it would make everything else easier. She had determined that the best way to do this would be to get Ilya in on Shane’s Tim Hortons sponsorship.

Ilya had to admit, the commercial was cute as hell. The angle that they were going with is that they were welcoming Ilya to Canada, by having him and Shane learn to run the Tim Hortons drive-thru in Shane’s neighbourhood where he grew up in Ottawa. Shane’s hometown, and Ilya’s new home. Ilya had thought that it would be a skit, that they would have actors in the drive-thru. That was not the case.

Ilya readjusted the headset now that it was placed over the visor. “Okay, I am ready. Send them in. How do I open this door?” Ilya asked, lightly slapping the order window.

Some poor teenaged girl named Sarah had been assigned to help them run the window. She had absolutely no idea who either of them were.

“It’s automatic,” she said, leaning in to help.

“Hello, welcome to Tim Hortons, may I take your order?” Ilya said into the headset. Shane was already trying not to giggle. This was probably the most professional Ilya had been in years.

“Hi,” the muffled voice came through. “Could I please get a double-double and a honey crueller?”

Ilya turned to the order screen. “She said she wants four honey cruellers,” Ilya whispered to Shane.

“No she did not,” Shane said. “She said a double-double and a honey crueller.”

“Twice double, yes.”

“No, a double-double is a coffee order.”

“Why is she trying to trick me?”

“Move,” Shane said, going to tap in the order. “Okay, you can go ahead and drive through.”

“Oh, actually I’m not done.”

Ilya slapped his hands over his mouth to giggle as Shane glared at him. “She isn’t done, Hollander. You are bad at this.” He pressed the button to start speaking into the microphone again. “Sorry ma’am, this is our first day.”

“Oh, that’s alright hun.”

When she finally pulled up to the window, her jaw dropped at the sight of Shane.

“Oh my god.”

“Hi, ma’am so sorry, we’re new, I’ve got my friend Ilya helping me but he is also new,” he gestured behind him, which Ilya took as a cue to poke his head up over Shane’s shoulder.

“Hi.”

Her eyes sparked in recognition. “You’re Ilya Rozanov. You just signed to Ottawa.”

“Yes. Groceries are so expensive here. I needed second job.”

One would think that after a half hour of continuous drive thru work, Ilya and Shane would have gotten the hang of it.

“Okay there is a real line out there,” Shane said, poking his head out the window.

“Ten timbits, okay,” Ilya said, tapping happily into the kiosk. “I will give mostly chocolate because those are best. Sir let me ask you, do you have favourite hockey player in Ottawa?”

The man hummed through the speaker. “I don’t really watch hockey but—oh, actually, that guy that just got traded I always liked, what’s his name…”

Ilya grinned at Shane, who rolled his eyes.

“Ilya Gonchorav?”

“I’ll take it,” Ilya replied. “Hollander, give this man extra timbits.”

A producer had handed them cards with prompts to ask through the drive-thru. Shane couldn’t imagine what would be going through his mind if he were the poor soul on the other side of the speaker getting personal questions in a Tim Hortons drive-thru.

“If you were stuck on a desert island,” he read, “would you rather be there with Ilya Rozanov or Shane Hollander?”

“Hm,” the woman said. “Honestly, they’re both a little young for me, but I think I’d have to go with Shane Hollander. I love a pretty boy.”

Shane grinned victoriously at Ilya, he couldn’t even be bothered by the fact that some rando had just called him a pretty boy. At least it was complimentary.

When she eventually pulled up to the window and saw who she was talking to, her blush spread all the way to her ears.

“Holy shit,” she said. “Oh my god, you’re both too young for me.”

Ilya gave her a free muffin.

“Okay, next one,” Ilya said, holding up a very specific card the producer had just handed him. “Who was rookie of the year in 2011?”

“Hm,” the voice came through. “Ilya Rozanov?”

“No,” Ilya said, grinning as Shane frowned. “Try again.”

“Hayden Pike?”

“One more try. From Ottawa.”

“Maybe...Shane Hollander?”

Ilya laughed at Shane’s expression when the man who drove up to the window was David Hollander.

“Oh come on,” Shane said, rolling his eyes. “You roped my dad into this?”

“Mr. Hollander, you have such great taste in hockey players!” Ilya exclaimed.

“Dad, just for that I’m not giving you any of the jelly filled.”

“I will be giving you 50 jelly-filled timbits Mr. Hollander.”

The commercial ended with a shot of Shane and Ilya, sitting at a table in the dining room, devouring a box of timbits, and opening their Tim’s hockey cards.

Ilya scrunched up his face. “Ugh, another Shane Hollander. Trade?”

“Come on, man.”

* * *

Ilya Rozanov had a mission.

“You said the last two players drafted receive car? Not the first two?”

Wyatt shrugged as he reclined his seat as far back as it would go. He had been chosen in the fan vote to join Ilya at the All-Star weekend. He was relishing a bit too much in these business class seats. “I guess they’re trying to make it a thing that ‘no one is really a loser.’”

“That is something only losers come up with.”

“Well, you don’t have to worry about that. I’m sure you’ll be a first pick. Or second. I’m not sure Hunter would pick you but, maybe Agbeko would. I don’t think you’ve ever punched him.”

Ilya slouched down further in his seat. “Hm. You know it wouldn’t be so bad. To win car.”

Wyatt was already ignoring him.

“Hunter, Agbeko, my dear good friends!” Ilya roared, swinging his arms over the two men in question.

“What do you want, Rozanov?” Hunter replied, shrugging off the Russian.

“I just want to say hello to close personal friend Scott Hunter!” He defended. “And also Edem.”

“Gee, thanks,” Edem Agbeko interjected. He was a defenseman from the Canes, their captain for the past gazillion years. He was an even more seasoned veteran than Scott Hunter, if that was possible.

“You need something?” Scott asked.

“Wow, so generous to ask! Yes Hunter, I do in fact.” He rounded to stand in front of the two Captains, holding out his hands in anticipation. “I need for you to draft me last.”

The way the All-Stars game worked was that two teams were formed, drafted by captains. This year, the teams were captained by the two men standing in front of him. They held his fate in his hands.

Hunter blinked. “What?”

“If I am drafted last or second last, I will win car. I need this car.”

“Didn’t you just sign a multi-million dollar deal with the Centaurs?” Agbeko asked.

“This is not important.”

“Did you not have a whole special about all of your fancy sports cars?”

“Yes but I do not have Honda.”

The two men stared at him blankly.

“I don’t understand,” Hunter finally replied.

“I need car.” Ilya explained. “You draft me last, I get car.”

“Why don’t you just buy a car?”

Ilya huffed, rubbing his hands over his face. “I cannot explain whole world to you Hunter, please just pick me last. Think of all I have done for you.”

“What have you done for me?” Agbeko questioned, genuinely dumbfounded.

“I have never punched you.”

“You checked me into the bench last time you were in Raleigh.”

“Softly.”

Hunter shook his head in disbelief. “Is this a running joke or something? Why do you need this car?”

“Hunter, Hunter, don’t worry about these things. Just consider reparations. For time you punched me in the face.”

Scott Hunter frowned. “You were trying to get me to punch you in the face.”

“Yes, because I am very good hockey player. How can I convince you? I can help you enlarge font size on your phone, I know technology can be difficult.”

“You’re not gonna let this go, are you?”

Ilya shook his head.

Scott chuckled lightly, before gesturing for Agbeko to follow him. “Talk to you later, Rozanov.”

Ilya watched as they walked away, calling after them. “Is this a yes? Hunter?”

Ilya was not confident that the first phase of his plan had worked. He needed to go public.

It starts on draft night. The athletes are all kept in a room behind the stage, emerging one by one as they’re drafted. The room was full of tables and drinks, getting rowdier and louder even as the room thinned.

“Hello instagram,” Ilya said, his accent thicker than normal, aided by vodka. “I want to go last today, I need a car so bad.” He angled the camera to Wyatt, whose cheeks were red as he grinned towards the camera.

“Please draft him last!” Wyatt shouted, far too loudly for someone who was so close. “Buddy won’t shut up about it.”

“I need a car so bad, please,” he reiterated to the camera.

At this point in time, about a third of the players had been drafted already. Ilya thought this was a good sign, considering that he had been drafted in the first two rounds for every prior

All-Star game he had attended. Shane had been drafted in the first round already, totally oblivious to what his boyfriend was up to.

The broadcasters had been making their rounds of the room, interviewing players to get their opinions on how the draft was going so far. It didn't take too long for them to narrow in on Ilya's table.

"We are here with Ilya Rozanov, now Ilya, tell us, we've been hearing a lot about you tonight, it sounds like you've got a very unique strategy for how you'd like the night to go!"

Ilya stared down the barrel of the camera. "I want to go last. I need a car."

The interviewer laughed. "Could you tell us, what do you think you'd bring to the table if you were drafted next?"

Ilya shook his head. "Absolutely nothing. I will be terrible, I will score on my own goal. Please choose me last."

The interviewer finally seemed to pick up on the fact that Ilya was not going to budge, turning to interview Wyatt, as well as the rookie from Detroit, who, while still lighthearted, made more of an effort to answer her questions.

The night went on, and Ilya emptied his bottle. The room thinned out more and more, and the sound coming from the stage next door amplified.

When the room was down to six players, the media rounded again. Ilya was ready for it.

"We're back with Ilya Rozanov, at least, I think so."

The camera panned to Ilya, who was not visible. He held a piece of paper in front of his face, scribbled in his terrible handwriting, reading "I WANT TO BE LAST I NEED A CAR."

"So Ilya, you've had a chance to evaluate, who do you want to pick you?"

Wyatt had been picked long ago, and the rookie not long after. Ilya spoke from behind the paper. "Nobody, I want to be last. I need a car so bad."

"Well, I think you might get it."

"Oh thank god."

Eventually, only three players remained in the room. A rookie from Calgary, a forward from Vegas, and 2-time winner of the Hart Memorial Trophy, Ilya Rozanov.

All cameras were on the remaining players, but Ilya's gaze was focused on the screen in front of him showing Scott Hunter, deliberating with his assistant captain. He squinted as he tried to stare down the dinosaur through the television.

"For our next pick for Team Hunter, we select Ilya Rozanov."

Ilya dropped his head onto the table, the bang echoing throughout the nearly empty room.

Everyone in the auditorium seemed to think it was very funny that Ilya was one pick away from his beloved car.

Ilya did not forget who was responsible as he glared across the room at Scott Hunter while he was handed his jersey.

“Sorry buddy,” Wyatt said, slapping Ilya on the shoulder as he took a seat next to him. “But hey, if you win MVP, you get a free car.”

Ilya perked up at that.

Ilya did not win MVP, despite his continued campaigning.

“Why do you need this car so bad?” Shane had asked, as Ilya banged his head against the wall in one of the back hallways of the arena. “You hate Hondas. You think they’re ugly.”

“You don’t understand, Hollander,” Ilya whined. “I need a car so bad.”

“You have cars!”

“I need this car!”

Approximately thirty days following the All Stars Game, Ilya received a call from Farah.

“Someone from Honda wants to give you a car?”

Ilya sat up from where he was lying on top of Shane on the couch.

“Really?”

“Apparently people won’t stop tweeting them about this, so, they folded. Why the hell do you want this car so bad?”

“Thank-you so much Farah! Email me the details!”

Ilya hung up, immediately pouncing onto Shane, his knees landing around his boyfriend’s hips. “Honda is giving me a car.”

“Are you fucking serious?” Shane laughed, letting Ilya kiss along his neck. “You bullied a car company into giving you, a multimillionaire, a free car.”

“See? I can be businessman too.”

“Why do you want this car so bad? Please just tell your boyfriend.”

Ilya propped himself up on his elbows, nuzzling his nose against Shane's. "I am going to sell it, then donate money to foundation."

Shane blinked. "Are you serious? Why didn't you just say that!"

Ilya shrugged. "Was more fun this way."

The scene of Ilya taking a fan's phone and making a video is something Brad Marchand did as a Bruin. He unfortunately did not go on to take several ridiculous photos in the locker room afterwards.

[Marchand Steals Phone](#)

Shane's method of taping his stick is based on Marie-Philip Poulin, captain of the Montreal Victoire. She is very picky about her taping method, though she is actually the one who draws a little face on her stick, along with her number, and a word she decides on that day. Ilya's tape job is the same as David Pastarnak of the Bruins, who had arguably one of the most insane tape jobs out there. It does get worse, there are a few players that use one horizontal strip, or just one round on the very end.

[Pasta Tape Job](#)

One of my big pet peeves is when I read a fic and they put players from opposing teams in the same penalty box. They used to be, but they had to start doing separate boxes in the 60s because everyone kept trying to murder each other. The boxes will also have attendants, who record the players' information and make sure they're keeping proper time. Players are allowed to talk to the attendants, it's more that the attendants aren't meant to initiate conversation.

The [bongo anthem](#) occurred in Nashville while they were playing Anaheim. Honestly, the bongos were sick as hell. Ilya's interview is taken from Trevor Zegras's response. The way Ilya reacts in the moment is similar to an incident with William Nylander after a rendition of the Star Spangled Banner on an electric guitar. Why is it the Americans always choose the craziest instruments for these? I think there's also a harmonica anthem that's pretty iconic.

[Nylander Anthem Reaction](#)

The NHL follower tracker bit was inspired by something the Boston Bruins did not long ago, where they unfollowed every NHL team, and then followed only Adam Sandler. This then prompted the Winnipeg Jets to unfollow the Bruins and start following a bunch of aviation fun fact twitter accounts. For this I decided that the Bears would follow Matt Damon, both because he is Bostonian and has a homoerotic relationship with Ben Affleck.

The series of asking about favourite hockey players was also stolen from a clip where Jaromir Jagr named himself as his favourite hockey player for a segment for Hockey Night in Canada.

[Jaromir Jagr Interview](#)

The Shane and Ilya Timmies commercial is inspired by a real commercial that Sidney Crosby and Nathan Mckinnon did. They do loads of Tims commercials since they're from the same

small town in Nova Scotia, and I like how low key they feel compared to a lot of other higher level productions. It's a very fun watch if you get the chance.

[Tims Commercial](#)

The story about the car is probably my favourite hockey story of all time. This was all thanks to Alex Ovechkin, who spent the entire 2015 All-Star game campaigning to be drafted last. The two captains of the eastern conference put together a conspiracy that no matter what, Ovechkin would be drafted third last, just to make sure he didn't get the car. Ovechkin did pretty much exactly what Ilya did here, he posted to instagram, and he held a sign up in front of his face whenever the media tried to talk to him. After his campaign to win MVP failed, a Honda dealership eventually teamed up with him to auction off a car after he revealed that his plan all along had been to donate it to a charity he works with for kids with developmental disabilities.

[Ovi Car](#)

Thank you guys so much for reading! I show the comments to my mom sometimes so just know you're loved :)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!